

## Editor Of National Review Admits 'Secret Data' Hoax

New York (AP)—With a broad grin, William F. Buckley, Jr., editor, revealed yesterday that publication in his *National Review* of so-called secret Vietnam documents was a hoax.

Mr. Buckley said the documents were composed by editors of the magazine "ex nihilo" out of nothing.

### Intended Purpose Cited

The intended purpose, Mr. Buckley told a news conference, was to demonstrate in regard to the earlier Pentagon papers "that the Pentagon and the CIA are not composed of incompetents . . . that forged documents would be widely accepted as genuine provided their content was inherently plausible . . . that the challenge in Southeast Asia was an aspect of the global challenge to the West, not a local affair."

Later, Mr. Buckley told a reporter at his Manhattan apartment:

"If the advice given in the magazine had been followed, we wouldn't be in Vietnam today. The point is that the pa-

pers, or something like them, must have been written. Therefore, one concludes that the difficulty was not that the Pentagon and the CIA gave LBJ bad advice, but that LBJ didn't take good advice."

Mr. Buckley's revelation of the hoax came after suspicion arose when several persons listed as authors of the printed documents could not recall writing them. One flatly denied authorship credited to his name.

### Not The First Put-On

It was not the first put-on staged by the 45-year-old Mr. Buckley, brother of New York's conservative Senator James L. Buckley. In 1965, William Buckley ran unsuccessfully for mayor of New York, stringing together long and little-known words, but on, summing up by saying that if elected he would "demand a recount."

Mr. Buckley founded the *National Review* in 1954 to further his political outlook, which he

described as radical conservative.

Referring to the secret document hoax, Mr. Buckley said: "The idea arose at an editorial meeting two weeks ago. We were discussing the Pentagon papers as released and the fact they were ideologically tendentious."

I, in fact, initiated the idea. I said, 'Hey, team, what do you think about this--?' We were remarking on the point Maxwell Taylor made that the papers were fragmentary.

### "Created Them"

"We reasoned that others at that time saw what was actually happening and gave appropriate advice to the government. We then created them. That step was easy for *National Review* editors."

Mr. Buckley said he had a hand in composing the false documents, but would not say who on the magazine's staff wrote them.

On July 16, Mr. Buckley went to the magazine mailed 6,000 letters "to our closest friends and supporters of *National Review* advising them of what we were doing."

Several subscribers have been contacted but said they had not received such a letter.

### "Invited Discovery"

"We mentioned a lot of people we didn't have to mention," Mr. Buckley said. "In that sense, we invited discovery. We couldn't have been surprised if within two hours after it appeared it had been called a hoax. We were more surprised than anybody at reading . . . that not even Dean Rusk had been able to deny what was printed."

Asked if the magazine planned any future capers, Mr. Buckley replied: "Maybe we should reveal the deliberations of the Central Committee of the People's Republic of China after the meeting with Kissinger."

In his news conference, Mr. Buckley said: "Co-operation from government officials was neither given nor sought."

"Those who will want to question the methods we used in order to make our demonstration may proceed to do so," Mr. Buckley's news conference statement said. "We admit that we proceeded in something of an ethical vacuum."

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## Buckley Confesses Hoax Over Printing of 'Secret Papers'

NEW YORK (AP)—With a broad grin, editor William F. Buckley Jr. revealed Wednesday that publication in his National Review of so-called secret Vietnam documents was a hoax.

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The intended purpose, Buckley told a news conference, was to demonstrate in regard to the earlier Pentagon papers "that the Pentagon and the CIA are not composed of incompetents... that forged documents would be widely accepted as genuine provided their content was inherently plausible... that the challenge in Southeast Asia was an aspect of the global challenge to the West, not a local affair."

### 'Must Have Been Written'

Later, Buckley told a reporter at his Manhattan apartment: "If the advice given in the magazine had been followed, we wouldn't be in Vietnam today. The point is that the papers, or something like them, must have been written. Therefore, one concludes that the difficulty was not that the Pentagon and the CIA gave LBJ bad advice, but that LBJ didn't take good advice."

Buckley's revelation of the hoax came after suspicion arose when several persons listed as authors of the printed documents couldn't recall writing them. One flatly denied authorship credited to his name.

Buckley, 45, is the brother of New York's Conservative Sen. James L. Buckley.

Buckley founded the National Review in 1954 to further his political outlook, which he described as radical-conservative.

Referring to the secret-document hoax, Buckley said: "The idea arose at an editorial meeting two weeks ago yesterday (Monday). We were discussing the Pentagon papers as released and the fact they were ideologically tendentious.

"I, in fact, initiated the idea. I said, 'Hey, learn, what do you think about this—?' We were remarking on the point Maxwell Taylor made that the papers were fragmentary.

"We reasoned that others at that time saw what was actually happening and gave appropriate advice to the government. We then created them. That step was easy for National Review editors."

Buckley said he had a hand in composing the false documents, but would not say who on the magazine's staff wrote what.

On July 16, Buckley went on, the magazine mailed 6,000 letters "to our closest friends and supporters of National Review advising them of what we were doing."

### Not Received

Several subscribers have been contacted but said they had not received such a letter.

"We mentioned a lot of people we didn't have to mention," Buckley said. "In that sense, we invited discovery. We wouldn't have been surprised if within two hours after it appeared it had been called a hoax. We were more surprised than anybody at reading... that not even Dean Rusk had been able to deny what was printed."

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In his news conference, Buckley said: "Cooperation from government officials was neither given nor sought.

"Those who will want to question the methods we used in order to make our demonstration may proceed to do so. We admit that we proceeded in something of an ethical vacuum.

"The New York Times has instructed us that it is

permissible to traffic in stolen documents. But they have not yet instructed us on whether it is permissible to traffic in forged documents. It is reported that the editors are divided on the issue.

"I take the opportunity to point out that there were no personal victims of the National Review papers, but, we like to believe, many beneficiaries.

### Tells of Decision

"Not wishing to protract, beyond the point of usefulness, the deception, I decided this morning, have consulted with my colleagues, to advise you of the character of the documents, their provenance and the purpose they sought to serve, and have served."

Buckley met with newsmen as he and his wife arrived at Kennedy Airport from Seattle.

Printed under the title, "The Secret Papers They Didn't Publish," the memorandum included dispatches attributed to former Secretary of State Dean Rusk, the CIA and others, relating to the Vietnam war. Most were dated in the early 1960s.

Daniel J. Boorstin, now director of the National Museum of History and Technology in Washington, D.C., repudiated Wednesday a 1963 memo that National Review said he had prepared in cooperation with the Committee of Historians and Cultural Anthropologists.

Contacted at his home in Washington, Boorstin said: "I can tell you I did not write that document. I have never heard of that committee."

Meanwhile, Adm. Arthur W. Radford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under President Dwight D. Eisenhower, joined three others, to whom National Review attributed documents, by saying he could not recall a 1954 memorandum he supposedly wrote recommending employment of

"I don't recall it at all," Radford said in Washington. The National Review had said in the issue that it obtained the documents from an unnamed source who made them available "in protest against what the informant held to be distorted impressions conveyed by the documents published in the New York Times," a reference to the Pentagon papers.

Buckley said the view of the Pentagon and the CIA as incompetents was "the unwarranted conclusion to which many Americans and non-Americans were led by the fragmentary revelations of the New York Times and Washington Post."

The false documents further were published with the intention of demonstrating, he said, "that forged documents would be widely accepted as genuine provided their content was inherently plausible."

Buckley went on to say that the magazine's report was "inherently plausible" because it advanced the theories that "the challenge in Southeast Asia was an aspect of the global challenge to the West, not a local affair."

The false documents, Buckley said, were intended to demonstrate "that North Vietnam had to be neutralized before South Vietnam could be tranquilized," and that "only hard and conclusive action against North Vietnam, as distinguished from incremental escalation, would accomplish this purpose and minimize American casualties."

Also intended to be demonstrated, he said, was "that a knowledge of the American character is fundamental to any strategic calculation and that Americans do not know how to handle long, slow wars."

Several of the National Review's papers warned against a prolonged U.S. involvement in Vietnam, others dealt with the National Liberation Front

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## A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT.

## Kennedy's Private War

Ralph L. Stavins

The article that follows is part of *The Planning of the Vietnam War*, a study by members of the Institute of Policy Studies in Washington, including Richard J. Barnet, Marcus Raskin, and Ralph Stavins.\* In their introduction to the study, the authors write:

"In early 1970, Marcus Raskin conceived the idea of a study that would explain how the Vietnam disaster happened by analyzing the planning of the war. A group of investigators directed by Ralph Stavins concentrated on finding out who did the actual planning that led to the decisions to bomb North Vietnam, to introduce over a half-million troops into South Vietnam, to defoliate and destroy vast areas of Indochina, and to create millions of refugees in the area.

"Ralph Stavins, assisted by Santa Pian, John Berkowitz, George Pipkin, and Brian Eden, conducted more than 300 interviews in the course of this study. Among those interviewed were many Presidential advisers to Kennedy and Johnson, generals and admirals, middle level bureaucrats who occupied strategic positions in the national security bureaucracy, and officials, military and civilian, who carried out the policy in the field in Vietnam.

"A number of informants backed up their oral statements with documents in their possession, including informal minutes of meetings, as well as portions of the official documentary record now known as the 'Pentagon Papers.' Our information is drawn not only from the Department of Defense, but also from the White House, the Department of State, and the Central Intelligence Agency."

The study is being published in two volumes. The first, which includes the article below, will be published early in August. The second will appear in May, 1972.

\*The study is the responsibility of its authors and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Institute, its trustees, or fellows.

At the end of March, 1961, the CIA circulated a National Intelligence Estimate on the situation in South Vietnam. This paper advised Kennedy that Diem was a tyrant who was confronted with two sources of discontent, the non-Communist loyal opposition and the Viet Cong. The two problems were closely connected. Of the spreading Viet Cong network the CIA noted:

Local recruits and sympathetic or intimidated villagers have enhanced Viet Cong control and influence over increasing areas of the countryside. For example, more than one-half of the entire rural region south and southwest of Saigon, as well as some areas to the north, are under considerable Communist control. Some of these areas are in effect denied to all government authority not immediately backed by substantial armed force. The Viet Cong's strength encircles Saigon and has recently begun to move closer in the city.

The people were not opposing these recent advances by the Viet Cong; if anything, they seemed to be supporting them. The failure to rally the people against the Viet Cong was laid to Diem's dictatorial rule:

There has been an increasing disposition within official circles and the army to question Diem's ability to lead in this period. Many feel that he is unable to rally the people in the fight against the Communists because of his reliance on virtual one-man rule, his tolerance of corruption extending even to his immediate entourage, and his refusal to relax a rigid system of public controls.

The CIA referred to the attempted coup against Diem that had been led by

General *[redacted]* in November, 1960, and concluded that another coup was likely. In spite of the gains by the Viet Cong, they predicted that the next attempt to overthrow Diem would originate with the army and the non-Communist opposition.

The Communists would like to initiate and control a coup against Diem, and their armed and subversive operations including united front efforts are directed toward this purpose. It is more likely, however, that any coup attempt which occurs over the next year or so will originate among non-Communist elements, perhaps a combination of disgruntled civilian officials and oppositionists and army elements, broader than those involved in the November attempt.

In view of the broadly based opposition to Diem's regime and his virtual reliance on one-man rule, it was unlikely that he would initiate any reform measures that would sap the strength of the revolutionaries. Whether reform was conceived as widening the political base of the regime, which Diem would not agree to, or whether it was to consist of an intensified counter-insurgency program, something the people would not support, it had become painfully clear to Washington that reform was not the path to victory. But victory was the goal, and Kennedy called upon Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric to draw up the victory plans. On April 20, 1961, Kennedy asked Gilpatric to:

- a) Appraise the current status and future prospects of the Communist drive to dominate South Vietnam.
- b) Recommend a series of actions (military, political, and/or economic, overt and/or covert) which will prevent Communist domination of that country.

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## Buckley Admits 'Secrets' Hoax; Many in News Media Taken In

By MINDA CHARLTON

William F. Buckley Jr., the publisher of National Review, acknowledged yesterday that the magazine's published collection of "highly classified documents" was a hoax. It had fooled a large segment of the American news media.

The disclosure that "The Secret Papers" on Vietnam were in fact an intricate spoof was made by Mr. Buckley at an afternoon news conference.

"We admit we proceeded in something of an ethical vacuum," Mr. Buckley said while conceding that the magazine's editors had composed the "documents" in their office.

But, smiling broadly, he said that one reason for this hoax had been to demonstrate—in the aftermath of The New York Times's publication of a series based on a Pentagon study of the Vietnam war—"that forged documents would be widely accepted as genuine provided their content was inherently plausible."

Many major newspapers gave prominent display on Tuesday and yesterday to articles about the National Review "documents." The two major news agencies—United Press International and The Associated Press—also distributed lengthy dispatches quoting from the "highly classified documents," as National Review described them.

The Associated Press bulletin noting Mr. Buckley's disclosure of the hoax yesterday afternoon interrupted a straightforward A.P. dispatch about the 14 pages of "documents."

They dealt with "strategy and counterstrategy" in Vietnam between 1962 and 1966, according to National Review. The general impression conveyed by the material was of United States officials, both civilian and military, seeking to avoid a long-term involvement in Southeast Asia.

The "documents" included "memoranda" from Pentagon officials, a "private letter" attributed to a former Ambassador to South Vietnam, several alleged Central Intelligence

Agency reports and a "handwritten note" by Dean Rusk, who was then Secretary of State.

They were all, Mr. Buckley said on his arrival at Kennedy International Airport from Vancouver, British Columbia, "in fact composed last week, ex nihilo, in the offices of National Review."

### Public Statements Used

At least some of the "documents," however, were not composed ex nihilo—out of nothing—but ex New York Times and the public statements and writings of some of those given credit of authorship in the magazine.

The first two memorandums quoted in National Review were in fact excerpted from actual memorandums printed by The Times in its series in June and July about the secret Pentagon study of the American role in Vietnam.

The dates and attribution of several other "memoranda" match the dates of other actual documents also printed by The Times in its series. Throughout the documents, there are both quoted phrases and close paraphrases of material from the Pentagon papers.

Only a few minutes before Mr. Buckley's 5 P.M. news conference, Daniel Z. Henkin, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, asked whether the department had reached a decision concerning the National Review documents, said: "All I can say is we're still looking into it."

### A Dual Investigation

Both the Pentagon and the Justice Department were investigating the documents, Mr. Henkin said, but "I don't have a reading for you at the moment." Earlier, a Justice Department spokesman said that the material was being reviewed by the internal security division "just as we reviewed the articles in The New York Times, The Washington Post, The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, The Boston Globe, and The Los Angeles Times, to determine what they are and whether they are classified."

One of those identified by National Review as having written a document was Prof. Frank N. Trager of New York University, who had been

as the co-author, with Douglas Pike, of a "confidential memorandum" on "The Structure and the Objectives of the National Liberation Front" for William P. Bundy, then an Assistant Secretary of State, in 1964.

Dr. Trager, first asked about the "memorandum" by The Times on Tuesday, said he could not be sure whether he and Mr. Pike might have written such a study. Yesterday, however, after reading it himself, he said: "I'm certain that's pieced together" from writings and speeches of his own and Mr. Pike.

### An Uncertain Envoy

One paragraph says that an element of the National Liberation Force's army is sometimes referred to "as the 'hard hats' (because of the fiberboard Vietnam helmets worn)." Before Mr. Buckley's admission, Dr. Trager said: "I'm absolutely convinced" that it was a spoof.

Several of those credited with authorship seemed uncertain early yesterday whether they had, indeed, written the letters and memorandums. Elbridge Durbrow, the United States Ambassador to South Vietnam from 1957 to 1961, said he could not verify—or deny—that he had written the "private letter" to Mr. Rusk, dated Aug. 10, 1966, printed in National Review.

"It's what I think," Mr. Durbrow said. "I wrote lots of letters to lots of people."

Tuesday night, Mr. Rusk also indicated uncertainty about an ostensible "handwritten memo" of February, 1965, attributed to him, about the possibility of declaring war on North Vietnam or the National Liberation Front—the Vietcong.

Another of the "authors" was Dr. Daniel J. Boorstin, the social historian who is director of the National Museum of History and Technology. Dr. Boorstin was credited with a "draft memorandum" written in 1963, entitled "Protracted Conflict and American Historical and Societal Character," dealing with a meeting of the "Committee of Historians and Cultural Anthropologists."

In an interview with The Times Tuesday, Dr. Boorstin denied having written the "draft memorandum," but said laughingly that he believed its author to be "Professor X" the "author" of a 1970 sociological spoof by Dr. Boorstin, "The Sociology of the Absurd or The Application of Professor X."

Dr. Boorstin and others were called by The Times on Tuesday. James L. Greenfield, former editor of National Review, said yesterday: "From the moment

we saw the magazine we believed its 'documents' were a hoax. So we avoided describing the contents in our story and tried to check with the co-called authors."

### Denial in Late Editions

The article in the late editions of The Times yesterday quoted Dr. Boorstin's "denial," his attribution of the memo to "Professor X" and the assumption, since verified, that he was Professor X. It also quoted Dr. Trager as having expressed uncertainty about his confidential memorandum and noting that nothing in it was classified information.

The article also quoted Mr. Buckley, who could not be reached directly, as having said through a spokesman that he was "hiding out where Daniel Ellsberg is." In fact, Mr. Buckley, and his wife were visiting her mother in Vancouver.

Priscilla Buckley, the managing editor of the magazine, earlier denied that the "memoranda" were a parody but had referred all questions to Mr. Buckley.

Officials of most of the news-gathering organizations conceded that they had accepted the "secret papers" at face value, with little or no attempt to check their authenticity.

Ben Bagdikian, national editor of The Washington Post, which published an article by a staff writer, Don Oberdorfer, about the National Review "documents" on its front page, said that The Post had first seen the news on the wire services. Unable to find a copy of National Review at two local newsstands, Mr. Bagdikian said, The Post obtained a Xerox duplicate of the copy in Senator James L. Buckley's office. The Senator is a brother of William and Priscilla Buckley.

### 'Went With What We Had'

Inquiries to National Review's office, Mr. Bagdikian said, were met with the reply that only Mr. Buckley could answer questions, and he was unavailable. "We checked our own documents and had none that seemed to be reflected in National Review," Mr. Bagdikian said.

The newspaper then "made a pass at checking" the material with several of the purported authors and "then we went with what we had," he said.

Robert Healy, executive editor of The Boston Globe, which published the Washington Post-Los Angeles Times News Service version of Mr. Oberdorfer's article on its front page yesterday morning, said his paper, "in the absence of any official Review documents" against its own Pentagon papers and went

# Viet 'Atom' Papers Hoax, Buckley Says

By Don Oberdorfer  
Washington Post Staff Writer

NEW YORK, July 21.—William F. Buckley Jr. said today that the "top secret" government documents on the Vietnam war published in his magazine, National Review, were a hoax designed "to demonstrate . . . that forged documents would be widely accepted as genuine provided their content was inherently plausible."

A subsidiary purpose, the National Review editor told a news conference, was to prove that it was "plausible" that American officials had recommended massive escalation in Vietnam, as favored by the conservative magazine.

Among other things, the false documents "showed" that high-ranking U. S. officials twice recommended use of nuclear weapons in Vietnam in 1964-5. Headlined "The Secret Papers They Didn't Publish," the documents had been described by the magazine yesterday as "fragments" from extensive files made available to it by an unnamed informant.

Buckley was asked today if it served any useful purpose for American news services to tell the public and the world on the basis of false documents that the U. S. government had seriously considered using nuclear weapons in Vietnam.

"It seems to me quite clear that the fact we have nuclear arms suggests that they ought to be used under certain circumstances," he replied.

"If it could be demonstrated that in 1965 a demonstration drop [of nuclear weapons] outside of Haiphong might save the lives of 45,000 Americans, I would suggest that it was a reasonable suggestion for the Joint Chiefs to make."

Buckley would not say whether he has any evidence that such a recommendation was actually made by the Joint Chiefs of Staff or anyone else in a high position in the American government.

"It is inconceivable to me that there is nobody in the Pentagon, CIA or White House who has the same analytical powers as a junior editor of National Review. We were proposing these things seven years ago," he said.

The conservative editor, columnist and television personality was smiling, joking and obviously enjoying the limelight of an airport press conference to announce the hoax after flying in from the West Coast.

Buckley said the documents, which took up 14 pages of the current issue of the National Review, were composed last week in the magazine's offices. He said the idea for the hoax issue sprang "full-blown in my mind" and added dryly it was "an arduous challenge" to emulate bureaucratic prose.

"Those who will want to question the methods we used in order to make our demonstration may proceed to do so," said Buckley, facing three camera crews and about 10 reporters. "We admit that we proceeded in somewhat of an ethical vacuum."

"The New York Times has instructed us that it is permissible to traffic in stolen documents. But they have not yet instructed us on whether it is permissible to traffic in forged documents," he said.

Buckley maintained that the failure of government agencies and former high officials to challenge the authenticity of the National Review papers was evidence of their "plausibility" as mere paraphrases of documents which do exist.

There were denials before the Buckley news conference. Prof. Daniel Boorstin, director

of the Smithsonian's National Museum of History and Technology, told newsmen this morning that he had not written the document ascribed to him by the National Review. Repeated efforts to reach Boorstin Tuesday night, before publication of news articles on the magazine disclosures, were unsuccessful.

But several of those named as authors of fake documents—including former Secretary of State Dean Rusk, former Secretary of State Dean Acheson, and Prof. Frank Trager—were unable to say Tuesday night whether the documents attributed to them were genuine.

Few if any of the officials or agencies named in the documents had seen copies of the National Review, which could not be found on newsstands in Washington Tuesday.

When copies did become available in government, officials began to say they could not find such documents in their files, but they indicated they were planning extensive searches.

The Washington Post got an advance copy of the National Review on Tuesday, from the office of the editor's brother, Sen. James L. Buckley (C-N.Y.). Attached was a calling card from the senator's press secretary, Leonard Saffir. He had written on it, "A journalistic coup. Messrs. Buckley and Rusher (National Review publisher William A. Rusher) deserve Pulitzer Prizes."

Yesterday, Saffir said that he had thought the documents were genuine and that his boss did not know anything about it since he was away in California. Asked what he thought the hoax proved, Saffir said, "Maybe it highlights the gullibility of the press. Maybe it proves the press should be more probing."

At the press conference here, William Buckley appeared unconcerned about the potential impact of the hoax on the credibility of his journal, which claims 115,000 circulation. He said the "plausible" hoax enhances the National Review's reputation for analysis.

Buckley maintained his magazine's "larger purposes" excused its publication of concocted documents at least as much as the "larger purposes" of major newspapers excused the publication of authentic documents about decision-

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